

Only this

An Instrument

H

From that little Stone cut out of the Mountain
without hands, to help to break in Pieces,
that Great Image which *Daniel* mentions,
Ch. 2. whose Feet was *part Iron and part Clay.*

O R,

A few Queries written to satisfy the chief Preacher in the Independent Church in *Bedford*, who desired the Author to write unto him, what Proofs he had for a Woman's speaking in the Church. He being concerned that so many of his Hearers should leave him to go to hear *Margaretti Everard* declare what God had done for her Soul, the 17th day of *June* last at my dwelling in *Bedford*.

Published for the Information of all Professors in Religion, that are part strong and part weak (as the text of the said Image) that is, part strong in a good Belief of what Christ Jesus in mercy suffered for all Mankind.

But weak in Faith, in not believing that Christ by his sufferings purchased a measure of his grace in every Soul, that brings Salvation to as many as are faithfull thereto, *Tit. 2. 11.*

That they may no longer (like the harden'd *Jews*) expect another Grace or Saviour, (that is) a restraining Grace that shall force them out of their Sins.

Poor Hearts! who has taught you, that God will except of forc'd Love, when Men doth not esteem such Love each to other.

By *WILLIAM MATHER*, A true
Lover of every Soul.

L O N D O N,

Printed for *Sarah Howkins*, in *George-Yard* in *Lombard-Street*, 1694.

20. B. The leaves are only bound.

FRIEND.



W Hereas, Thou bid me write unto thee, my proofs, for a Woman's speaking in the Church; and because Mens speaking there, relates thereto, I shall add somewhat of it also; therefore to satisfie thee (if I can,) I think best to do it by way of Query, (the fewer words) that I may give occasion to none to say I go about to teach thee, who art a Teacher to so many People.

1. Did St. *Paul* write, That a Woman should not be permitted to speak in the Church? Wilt thou not suppose, he meant she should not speak, so as to ask Questions to raise Disputes? Thou wilt acknowledge, she ought to come to Church, and not learn only of her Husband at home? If not, how must the Widow do to learn? If it had been as thou supposes, That a Woman was not to speak at all in the Church, *Paul* would not have said, *That every woman, that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered, dishonoureth her head*, 1 Cor. 11. 5. And was not *Phillip's* four Daughters Prophetesses, *Acts* 21. 9. and wherein is the difference between Prophesying and Preaching?

2. Is it not recorded in the Book of Martyrs, that after *William White*, a Preacher, was burnt for the Truth, his Wife followed his Steps, sowing abroad the same Doctrine, confirmed many in Gods Truth, wherefore she suffered much trouble and punishment, whether or no, did the Church then do well to let her teach?

3. Dost thou own the Church of England's Catechism, in which is written, *That Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord are Signs of an inward and spiritual Grace*? Now whether any in these days need to use the Signs that witness the Substance, (that is,) *The Inward and Spiritual Grace*, to cleanse their Souls from Sin. Answer, yea or nay? Seeing *this grace, that came by Jesus Christ, brings Salvation to all that obey it*, Tit. 2. 11. 1 Cor. 12. 7. Rom. 1. 19.

4. Whether or no, may not a Woman as well as a Man declare in a Congregation, the Experiences she has had of the power and virtue of this *inward and spiritual Grace* in her Soul, and how that by the alone help thereof, she has forsaken the Devil and all his Works? If she did not speak this to people God would condemn

* Then not
always si-
lent.

her. Do not Women speak their Experiences in your Church and Sing *? Then Women may speak in the Church; and whether *mans wisdom* that preaches, be not the *Woman*, that should not be permitted to teach in the Church, yea or nay, 1 Cor. 2. 4. 13.

5. Whether or no, are not both Men and Women, *Intrudors* that do teach in a Religious Meeting other things than what they experimentally witness of the work of this *inward and spiritual grace* in their Souls? Bring Scriptures only as a proof, when divinely inspired, (by Gods grace) so to do; for *Paul* would preach, of *what God had wrought in him*, 2 Cor. 10. 15. Rom. 2. 21.

6. Dost thou believe, that this *inward and spiritual grace* is a witness against all Sin, in every Soul, and that People now are to have no other Teacher in this the day of Christs spiritual appearance, or second coming in Spirit to cleanse the Soul from Sin, And that *Man* is no more to be accounted of, no further than to encourage others to come and obey Christs Grace in them, a *Teacher that cannot be removed into a corner*, Isa. 30. 20. Joh. 6. 45.

Praised be
the Lord
for it.

7. Dost thou believe that this spiritual day of Grace is dawned? And that there are thousands of Souls in this Nation, that do witness Gods promise fulfilled in their Souls, (that is,) of *teaching his people himself*, Joel 2. 28. by his *inward and spiritual grace*; that *they need not the teachings of Man* (as many of us witness, 1 John 2. 27.) Yet, it's a great comfort to us, to hear a Man or Woman declare what they know of God, and also to read in the holy Scriptures, the Saints Warfare and Experiences; though none of these things will do a Soul good, except he turn in his Mind, so as to obey this *inward and spiritual grace*: For nature is dark as to the things of God, almost as a Beast, without applying to Gods Grace for help; the alone Armor of a Christian to keep off the Darts of the Devil.

We must
sin every
day, saith
this Prea-
cher unto
me, June
18. --94.

8. Didst thou ever know a Man, that sinned every day, and did believe he must do so as long as he lived, that ever turned one Soul to God, (that is) to obey *God's grace faithfully*? If thou didst, Then one Sinner can convert another, and before a man is converted, he can strengthen his Brethren; Is not this impossible?

9. Did not Jesus come into the World as born of a Virgin to *save all people from sinning* here, Matth. 1. 21. If they will obey his *Talent of Grace* in them? and I also ask whether a man is any further saved by Christ, than he is saved from Sin? For if he is not sanctified, or saved from committing of Sin, the fault is not
in

in God's Grace, which is always ready to give power to resist all Temptations, except such as have sinned out their days.

10. Whether all that have a form of Godliness, and deny the power thereof, are not to be turned away from? And whether all those that believe, *that the inward and spiritual grace in all men,* will not or has not power to cleanse the Soul from Sin (if obeyed) do not deny the power of Godliness, and are yet in *Babylon*, Rev. 18. 4.

11. Didst not thou affirm to me, that the Light of Man in us was darkness, when it is a Light from Christ in the Soul, whereby the Soul may see its way to please God, *John 1. 4*? It is called also *Grace, Spirit, Word in the heart, The anointing, &c.* 1 John 2. 27. If thou hates this Light, thou hates Christ. Its true, that *all hate the Light, that love their evil deeds,* Job. 3. 19. 20. 21.

12. What Scripture-proof hast thou for reading a line in verse for the people to sing? And whether people can sing to the praise of God, whose Souls are not raised out of the Grave of Sin? Seeing the Apostle saith, *If the dead rise not, preaching is vain?* And whether God is not as really worshipped by praying by a Book, as singing by a Book.

13. What Scripture-proof hast thou for taking a verse in the Scripture, and studying a long discourse from it? And whether the peoples hearing such long Sermons or Speeches be God's Worship? And whether God can be worshipped any where but in the Centre of the Soul? And whether Persecutors or Informers could ever disturb God's spiritual Worship? And whether the first that speaks in the Church, *is not to hold his peace, if any thing is revealed to another that sits by, that he may speak also,* 1 Cor. 14. 13?

14. Didst not thou affirm to me, that there are Three persons in Trinity or God-head? I hope thou wilt answer that with thy Scripture-proofs, as the other above in Love, as in Love I write this at thy desire.

Concluding with this caution, *That thou take heed, that thou speaks no more evil of a people, that thou knowest not, (that is) The Christian Quaker; because I am sure thou canst not know them, except the said Inward and Spiritual Grace was thy only Teacher.* Now, *that it may be thy guide, that by it thou might be impowred to turn many to it; that thereby, they may receive strength to walk in the path of righteousness to please God, is the Prayer of him that loves all people.*

June 22.

TO the Queries above, I do not hear that he intends me an answer in writing; the best answer I desire is, That he make choice of Christ's *inward and spiritual Grace*, for his only Teacher, then may he be enabled to prevail with many of his hearers to obey the same. This indeed would be a happy day which I have long hoped for.

The truth is, since he had the Queries above, he has in his Pulpit advised his Hearers, *To cleanse their Souls from sin*: Alas! what doth that avail, together with his telling them of the Torments of Hell, except their minds are turned into the Centre of their Souls, there to Worship God, in his *inward and spiritual Grace*, for nothing else can cleanse their Souls from Sin, and make them become Worshipers of God in Spirit and in Truth; silently waiting (out of their own thoughts:) A strange thing to this Preacher, *John 4.* who has already derided waiting in silence upon God; for he can preach, pray and sing when he will, contrary to the Primitive Christians.

One of this Preachers hearers (whom I sent the Queries to him by) told me, he did believe he was not yet satisfied, that a Woman should be permitted to speak in the Church, caused me to add the Queries that follows, (otherwise I think I had writ no more) yet hoping he may turn in his mind to *Christ's Grace* in himself, so may he turn many to a righteous and holy Conversation; then will he shine as a bright Star in the Firmament of Truth; he having such a fair opportunity to win Souls to God, (having such a great number of Hearers.) Oh! happy is that man that turns one Soul to God (that is) to obey Christ's *inward and spiritual Grace faithfully*! Oh! that God in mercy would be pleased to shew him in what he trusts, but God's time is the best time for him and the *Turks and Jews* to see their blindness: God's will be done.

Lastly, God knows my heart, I do not write the following in Enmity to any Person or Persons whatever, but only in what I can incline my Readers to chuse God's Grace in themselves to be their Armor to keep off the Snares of the Devil and devilish Men.

And that none that reads these Lines, may any longer reject the Chief corner Stone, the said *Grace or Light* in them, that beams from the Sun of righteousness in their Souls, whereby they may plainly

plainly see all the crooked by-paths of the World, the Flesh and the Devil, that leads to everlasting misery after Death; and also may see by that Light from Christ in them, how to walk safely in the strait and narrow, but delightfull Path, that leads to God's Kingdom to have a Life of endless Joy with God for ever, so be it, *Amen.*

The second part of Queries: which, I hope, will fully satisfie this Independent Preacher, That a woman may speak in the Church, when moved by God's Grace so to do.

15. Hast thou not read, that the ancient Jews was not for permitting Women and Children to ask Questions in the Church, and was not *Paul* of the same mind?

16. Is not Male and Female all one in Christ, and whether any but Deceivers will limit God, that he shall not send a message by a Woman.

17. Did not God send a Woman among your persecuting Brethren in *New-England*, with her face blackt, as a sign to them for their wicked lives, that the Black-Pox should come upon them, which accordingly came to pass? See *Geo. Keith's Visible Church in New-England.*

18. Dost thou believe that *Paul* ever forbid any Woman to speak or teach in the Church, that was moved thereto by the Spirit of Christ? And whether a woman was not a fellow labourer with *Paul* in the work of the Gospel?

19. Whether *Paul* ever forbid any other women to speak in the Church, except those talkative women in the Church of *Corinth*, who troubled the Church with their unprofitable questions?

20. Hast thou not a strong zeal against a womans preaching sound Doctrine? I wish thy zeal was as strong against thy women Hearers, who are now so stiff-necked as to carry the *Devils Towers* on their heads, whilst thou art teaching them to leave pride: And the men that are so proud as to wear womens Hair that was bak't in Pyes to make it remain in Curles, and must be powder'd too. Is not this abomination? Look back to your ancestors called *Puritans*, whose short Locks, little Bands, and plain modest Apparel became a Cross to the vain World? But you as well as all other religious Professions, have degenerated from their first Innocence; and how many of thy proud hearers hast thou admonished

ed for their pride at their own houses, as is thy duty, if a true Preacher?

21. Was not that woman that *Jesus* met at *Jacob's Well*, *Job. 4.* a Preacher, who declared to the men of the City, *Come, see a man that hath told me all that ever I did, is not this the Christ?* Can any man now preach better Doctrine? and was it not a woman that published Christ's Resurrection?

22. Did not *Luther* affirm, That every good Christian, (not only Men, but even Women also) is a Preacher?

23. How dar'st thou preach against pride, when most of you seek as much as you can to promote pride; for do not you uncover your heads, bow and bend oftener to a fine long Tower or Top-knot, than to God? Doth not such worshipping Images make the proud hearts more pufft up with pride, making those Idols deck themselves the finer next time (if they can) that they may be the more worshipped and bowed unto? You calling men frequently Sir, Sir, at every turn, to flatter them (though mean in the world,) and the women Mistresses to flatter, when you have read *Job. 5. 44.* *How can you believe, that receive honour one of another?* and against flattering Titles, *Job 32. 21, 22. 1 Thess. 2. 5.* And to call no man Master, that is not really your Master. But you can twist these Doctrines of Christ to serve self-interest, as you do that Doctrine of not *swearing at all*, *Matth. 5. 34.* *James 5. 12.* and others, being out of the true Faith, that's without respect of persons, *James 2. 1, 2.*

24. Was *Franciscus Lambertus* in the right or no, who writes, "But above all things be carefull thou follow not the manner of Hypocrites, who have written almost more by word, what they are to say, as if they were to repeat some Verses upon a Theatre, have learned all their Preachings, as they do that act Tragedies (or Plays) and afterwards when they are in the place of Prophesying, pray the Lord to direct their Tongues, but in the mean time shutting up the way of the holy Spirit, they determine to say nothing but what they have written. O unhappy kind of Prophets, yea, and truly cursed, which depend not upon God's Spirit, but upon their own Writings or Meditations? Why prayest thou to the Lord, thou false Prophet, to give thee his holy Spirit, by which thou mayest speak things profitable, and yet thou repellest the Spirit? Why preferrest thou thy Meditation or Study to the Spirit of God? otherwise, why com-
"mittest

"mitteſt thou not thy ſelf to the Spirit. Again, (ſaith he) The
 "Sheep of Chriſt ſeeketh nothing but the Voice of Chriſt, which
 "he knoweth by the Holy Spirit, wherewith he is fill'd, he re-
 "gards not learning Tongues (or Languages †) or any outward † To make
 "thing, ſo as therefore to believe this or that to be the Voice of a Miniſter,
 "Chriſt his true Shepherd, he knoweth that there is need of no for that
 "other thing but the Teſtimony of God's Spirit, &c. *Tract. 5. avails not.*
 "Prophecy, *Chap. 3. 24.* And doth not Dr. Everard, an Inde-
 pendent, write the only method that holy Men of old obſerved, was
 to ſpeak as they were moved by the Holy Spirit?

25. Whether or no, are not ſuch Teachers groſs Hypocrites,
 that at the end of their Worſhip ſay to their Hearers, *I commit you*
to God's Grace, when they intend no ſuch thing; for if their Hear-
 ers chuſe God's Grace in themſelves for their chief Guide and only
 Teacher, and by the help thereof come to forſake the Devil and
 all his Works, the Pride and Vanity of this wicked World, throw-
 ing by thoſe helliſh Towers from the Womens Heads? Theſe
 vain Teachers will be the firſt that will mock them, and it may
 be tell them, you are going to be a Quaker, and that they think
 is the odiouſeſt name they can give them; little conſidering what
 theſe Teachers forced poor Men and Women (calling them God-
 fathers and Godmothers) to Promise and Vow for Infants, that
 they ſhall forſake the Devil, and the Pomps and Vanities of this
 wicked World, which brings to a ſtate of perfection, and yet
 theſe Teachers will deny that Perfection is attainable on this ſide
 the Grave, contrary to Scripture, *Matth. 5. 48. and 11. 29, 30.*
Job. 1. 8. Gen. 6. 9. 1 Job. 5. 3. and 1. 10. 8. 5. and 2. 4. and 36.
Rev. 22. 14. Eph. 4. 11, 12, 13.

26. Is it not great Hypocriſy in thee, to bid thy Hearers when
 thou art in thy Pulpit, *To cleanse their Souls from Sin*; and out of
 thy Pulpit ſay to me, We muſt ſin every day as long as we live?
 And alſo to tell them in thy Pulpit for Doctrine, *The reaſon why*
ſo many die in ſin eternally, is becauſe they will; and at other times
 tell them, That a certain number of Souls are elected and the reſt
 reprobated to Eternity before they have done Good or Evil, (is
 not this Myſtery Babylon in one of her fineſt drefſes?) Alas! none
 are reprobated before they have acted much Evil; nor are Infants
 that know not Love, *Rom. 4. 15. and 5. 13.* as full of Sin, as a
 Toad is full of Poyſon, as a Member of thy Church ſaid in my
 hearing; The Election is in Chriſt the true Seed, and all that joyne

to him are entering into the Election, and continuing faithfull comes to be chosen.

The reprobate Seed is the Devil, who rules in the Hearts of wicked People that obey not Christ's Grace in them so, by a continual Resistance of the Reproofs of God's Grace comes to be in a reprobate State.

27. Has not many poor Souls been almost (or quite) distracted about your Sin-pleading Notions, and the frothy Lives of too many of you, but most chiefly about a Notion you are said to hold, *That God bids men believe, and be saved, and not gives power to do so?*

And have you not said to such poor bewildered Souls, *Your Distraction is in order to the work of God upon your Souls? fear not, if you die, you shall go to Heaven;* for once in Grace ever in Grace, contrary to these Scriptures, *Ezek. 18. 26. Job. 15. 6. Rom. 11. 20. 1 Cor. 9. 17. 2 Pet. 1. 10. Heb. 3. 12, 13. and 4. 11. and 6. 4, 5, 6. and 12. 15. 2 Tim. 4. 3. and 4. 10. and 2. 17, 18. 1 Tim. 1. 18, 19. and 4. 1. 1 Thess. 3. 5. 2 Pet. 2. 14. 13. 18. 22.* And remember how by your judging young *Whiteman*, late of *Cardington*, you brought into distraction. See somewhat thereof in p. 218. of the 4th Edition of the *Young-man's Companion*.

28. Has not those of thy Church lost Christian Charity, that said (as I am informed) that if the Quakers should have one Meeting in your Meeting-house (I once desiring it one day when you might spare it,) *They should never after think to go into it again?* Fie, fie, pray no more for the Conversion of the *Jews* and *Turks*, what would you have them to convert to? For what can they expect from you, that has so little Love for your Fellow-Christians that truly worship the same God, as you say you do, owning Christ Jesus, a Patron of Meekness and Lowliness, and that his Followers should be so.

But for brevity sake I shall now pass by several of your Actings; yet to a little mind you of your want of good example, in bringing Boys with you to the Meeting, and let them play at the Door in Sermon-time by making of Noises, throwing Hats at each other (with thy * Boarders) and into my Orchard adjoining, and also throwing Stones into the middle of my Orchard to spoil my Trees, that I verily believe the Boys have thrown Cart-loads of Stones from your Meeting-yard into my Orchard within these 5 years last past, thy Hearers laughing or smiling to see them, and yet you

* He cannot be a true Teacher, that has no authority to rule his own Family well.

you will order no man to keep good Orders in the time of your Worship, though the Magistrates have often told you of it; yea one of the Magistrates told me, that he said to some of you, It was a shame you kept no good Discipline, and that it was more like a Play-hobste, than a place of Religious Worship; yet though I have been often wronged by these things, I bear no Enmity to any of them.

Now considering that some of those People that have seen the first part of the Queries in writing, begin to consider that there's no true satisfaction to the Soul in hearing man's wisdom preach, *Act. 2. 4. 1 Cor. 1. 17, 20, 21. and 2. 3, 4, 5. 2 Cor. 2. 17.* tho' they have been learning of Man 30 or 40 years, and neglect the Teachings of Christ's *inward and spiritual Grace*. This inclined my heart to publish them in the fear of God and true Love to all; hoping they may be of some service to those who have not yet chosen Christ's *inward and spiritual Grace* for their Teacher.

To conclude, I am very sensible, there are a few honest Hearts amongst this People, whom my Soul dearly loves. I mean such of them, as daily hunger and thirst after Righteousness, that God might fill them therewith, and that Righteousness might fill the whole earthly Hearts of all Men and Women. These, I say, truly loves all People, yea their very Enemies.

These, and all such as these, where-ever they are walking at present, (and of different Forms of Worship at this time) are of the true Seed of *Sion*, of whom glorious things are spoken of in the Holy Scripture, and which the Lord loves above all the Dwellings of *Judah*, above all the Out-works of formal ways of all Professions, it's they that honour the God of Heaven, and maketh his Name to be loved in the Earth.

These truly noble self-denying Sou's will not go to any place to preach before God has sent them; and if sent, will be of *Paul's* mind, To work with their hands rather than to make the Gospel changeable. And in the mind of *Prosper*, an ancient Protestant, who saith, *That he that takes any thing for Preaching, and is able to live of himself, doth it not without Sin*. Oh that many more might be raised up, that delights in a holy Conversation to please God, that the Name of the Lord may be magnified in the Earth, is the Prayer of

William Mather.

For

For these worthy and renowned Souls will not (to get Money for preaching) shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against Men, by telling them, (as too many Teachers do now) *That the small Talent of Grace, that troubles you in your Conscience when you do evil, is not the Key to God's Kingdom.*

A Testimony.

SELDEN, the greatest Scholar and Antiquary of his time, one who had taken a diligent Survey of what Knowledge was considerable amongst the *Jews, Heathens and Christians*; at last professeth this towards the end of his days, (in his Conference with Bishop Usher,) *That notwithstanding he had been so laborious in his Inquiries, and curious in his Collections, and had possessed himself of a Treasure of Books and Manuscripts in all ancient Subjects, yet he could rest his Soul on none save the Scriptures; and above all, that passage lay most remarkable upon his Spirit, Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. For the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all men, Teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. See W. P. No Cross, no Crown, p. 388. and the Character of a true Christian, in p. 54. in my Young Man's Companion.*

B E D F O R D,
Aug. 20. -94.

T H E E N D.